

tion. Another cause is, probably, the closer connection which smell and taste have with the process of nutrition, and the consequent alterations which repeated impressions upon them may have upon the general well being. A man may pass long hours in a picture gallery or concert room, receiving impressions good, bad, or indifferent, without much effect upon digestion or circulation, but a bad odour would quickly excite nausea or sickness. The impressionable natures of Southern Italy object to strong perfumes, even though pleasant. The sense of taste differs in one particular from the other three, viz. that while the agents which excite them may remain outside the body, the substances which excite taste are taken into the body, and thus have an action upon it independently of their mere effect upon the sense itself. In gratifying this sense, therefore, we have to consider not merely what will give the greatest pleasure at the moment, but what will be most satisfactory in its after results. Fortunately, pleasure to the palate usually aids digestion, if obtained in the proper way; but comparatively few people know the art of dining properly themselves, and still fewer know how to give good dinners to their friends.

The two works before us are intended to supply this lacking knowledge, both by giving general rules and special examples. Walker's "Aristology" deals more with the general rules of dining, and especially of dining as a social duty, and Sir Henry Thompson more particularly with the details of food and cookery. In discussing food, the latter author makes some very sound remarks regarding the excessive amount of butcher's meat eaten by Englishmen, and its injurious consequences. In the working classes it leads to wasteful extravagance, although the manual labour which they have to undergo may lessen its deleterious effect upon their health. In the upper classes, where its price has but little effect upon the purse, its injurious action upon the body is increased by want of exercise, and tends, as the author truly says, to shorten or embitter life. The food of middle class Englishmen might be rendered not only much more palatable, but much more healthy, by the introduction of larger proportions of fish, vegetables, and farinaceous substances, as well as by greater variations in the modes of preparation. Both these subjects are well considered by Sir Henry Thompson.

The question of the best combination of dishes in a meal, and the arrangement of the meals, next engages the author's attention; and after this he discusses the question of wines, coffee, water, and tobacco, gives a scheme for a dinner, and a number of *menus* for different months in the year, finishing up with suggestions for the improvement of public dinners, and for the better teaching of cookery and supply of food throughout the kingdom. The contents of Sir Henry Thompson's book thus corresponds to its title, "Food and Feeding," and it gives the elements of the dinner. Walker's "Art of Dining" aspires to a higher gastronomic level. It is written in a series of most readable little essays, in which the directions which concern the kitchen are omitted, and the foods are discussed as they appear upon the table. The key-note of the book may be found in the little sentence, "The chief maxim in dining with comfort is to have what you want when you want it," and in order to attain this the writer shows how the attendants should be ordered, and

how the little adjuncts to the dishes should be arranged, so that no one shall have to wait for anything a moment after the desire for it has arisen. But more than this. It often happens that people do not know what to desire, and this the author tries to show them, by giving them illustrations of little dinners which he has had with his friends, and in which dishes and wines were so arranged in quantity and quality as to give the maximum of enjoyment. A puzzle in physics is the question whether a glass of water containing a cork would be heavier when the cork was fastened to the bottom of the glass or allowed to float on the water. The answer is that it would be heavier when the cork was at the top, because its place at the bottom of the glass would be taken by an equal bulk of water, which is heavier, and thus the attraction of gravity would act on the greater mass at the lesser distance. The author would apply a similar principle to the art of dining, and, instead of as usual keeping the delicacies until the last, when the appetite is palled by the previous dishes, he would give them first, when their enjoyment would be heightened by an excellent appetite.

"At a party of six persons, if the dinner consisted of soup, fish, a joint, and three woodcocks, I maintain it would be much better to serve the woodcocks before the joint, both on the score of enjoyment and of health—of enjoyment, because a delicacy, when the appetite is nearly satisfied, loses a great part of its relish, and is reduced to the level of plainer food whilst the appetite is keen—of health, because it is much more easy to regulate the appetite when the least tempting dishes are brought last." By serving delicacies first, people would dine both more satisfactorily and more moderately, and entertainments would be less costly and less troublesome."

This quotation may serve as an example of the book. To quote all that is worthy would be to transcribe the volume, and if it were read carefully and acted up to by every host, dinners would become a source of pleasure, instead of being, as they too often are at present, weary stale, and unprofitable.

OUR BOOK SHELF

Studies on Apus, Limulus and Scorpio. By E. Ray Lankester, M.A., F.R.S. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1881.)

In these exceedingly clever memoirs we have a proof of how much can be made out of even well-known subjects by assiduous research, when combined with some speculative talents. The first memoir on *Apus cancriformis* is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of this most interesting Crustacean. The second on *Limulus*, an Arachnid, is even more interesting, and in its conclusions more startling, with it is combined a very elaborate comparison of the various systems of *Limulus* with those of *Scorpio*, and starting with the undoubted affinity of *Limulus* to the strange extinct *Eurypterina*, we have the suggestion that the *Merostomata*, including under this head the *Xiphosura*, the *Trilobita*, and *Eurypterina* diverged from the main stem of the Arthropod pedigree at a point between that indicated by the grade of organisation of *Peripatus*, and that occupied by the *Pro-Phyllopoda* or earliest Crustaceans, and it was in the time that these three great groups began to be formed, that each carried off with it some distinct evidence of their common departure.

The illustrations vastly assist in explaining the various technical details, and we are glad to see a large number incorporated in the text, thereby being rendered much

more easy of reference to the reader, than when relegated to plates at the end of a memoir.

Fashion in Deformity, as Illustrated in the Customs of Barbarous and Civilised Races. By William Henry Flower, LL.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.S., &c. With Illustrations. 8vo, pp. 85. (London: Macmillan and Co.)

IF Prof. Flower by this little work has not rendered good service to medicine, and tended greatly to prevent the diseases due to the prevalence of absurd fashions, it is certainly not his fault. He discusses the curious fashion which has prevailed among all nations, of inflicting upon themselves serious pain and inconvenience, as well as rendering themselves abominably ugly, in their endeavours to conform to a false standard of beauty. He begins with the epidermal appendages—nails, hair, teeth, and skin, proceeding to alterations in the bony skeleton. After discussing the modes of dressing the hair, the first figure he gives is that of the hand of a Chinese ascetic, in which the finger nails appear to be nearly a foot long, and twisted almost like the tendrils of a vine. The custom of tattooing perhaps inflicts upon the votary of fashion more pain than almost any other. The process varies from making gashes with sharp stones, and rubbing wood-ashes into them, to pricking delicate patterns into the skin by pieces of shell cut into a number of fine points, or by a bundle of sharp needles, and then rubbing colouring-matter into the punctures. The custom of wearing rings and plugs in the lips, nose, and ears is sometimes carried to a most exaggerated extent, one man, in an island near New Guinea, having such holes in his ears, that the lobes were converted into great pendants of skin, through which he could easily pass his arms. Such deformities of fashion, although most disagreeable to our ideas, are of much less importance than those which affect the bony skeleton. The author gives a full description of the various modes of altering the shape of the head adopted by various tribes, and of deforming the foot amongst the Chinese. But from savage tribes, Mr. Flower passes on to deformity in fashion amongst ourselves. He shows, by drawings of deformed English feet, and of the modern Parisian shoe, that, much as we may ridicule the Chinese, we are very little better than they. In one particular, indeed, we may be said to be very much worse than either Chinese or savages; for, while they deform the foot, we deform that part of the body which contains our vital organs. How far removed from nature is the form imparted to the figure by fashion, is seen by comparing the figures of the Venus of Milo, and of a lady dressed in the fashion of 1880.

We fear that no amount of warning regarding the pain, suffering, and danger to life which such fashions entail, will ever prevent them from being followed; but it is possible that when fashionable people come to see that their absurdities reduce them to the same level of taste as a Botocudo Indian or Bongo Negro, they may be induced to seek after a higher standard, which shall at once be beautiful, and true to nature.

Cameos from the Silver-Land; or, The Experiences of a Young Naturalist in the Argentine Republic. By E. W. White. In two Volumes. Vol. I. (London: John Van Voorst, 1881.)

THIS is the first volume of an interesting work which would appear to give a true and vivid sketch of the great Argentine Republic as it is at the present day. The great Republic seems, by the test of the London Exchange, to be well holding its own, but the notions current in England about it are often absurd in the extreme. Mr. White has in this volume given us a very good guide-book to the province, detailing the chief peculiarities of its climate, giving an account of its various races, of the state of the education of the people in the province, and of its natural resources. Buenos Ayres is described in a very

enthusiastic way, and the behaviour of its inhabitants is spoken of in glowing terms. The first few chapters are devoted to the experiences of our young naturalist in the large cities. When he left these for trips to Cordoba and such like distant places his experiences as a naturalist began, and we follow such wanderings with real pleasure. At one time he journeyed to Cosquin to hunt the Condor; again to Mendoza for the Guanaco; but wherever he went he was sure to observe and record some interesting incident about the flowers and birds and insects that he met with.

Select Extra Tropical Plants Readily Eligible for Industrial Culture or Naturalisation, with some Indications of their Native Countries and some of their Uses. By Ferdinand, Baron von Mueller, K.C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S. New South Wales Edition, enlarged. (Sydney: Government Printers, 1881.)

IT would be difficult to convey an accurate idea of the large amount of information which the author has brought together within the compass of the 400 pages forming this volume, an edition of which was some years ago published by the Victoria Acclimatisation Society, and also not long since in Calcutta by the Central Government of India. While the present edition does not put in a claim for completeness, either as a specific index or as a series of notes on the respective technologic applicability of the plants enumerated, still, we have here brought together an immense assemblage of useful plants arranged in alphabetical order, but with a systematic index and also their correct scientific names, and the chief facts of interest that concern each as to its uses to mankind. Some of these plants, all of which are presumed to be capable of cultivation in extra-tropical countries, are good for food, either as yielding pot-herbage, or roots, or fruits. Others are useful for dyes, for their fibre, as fodder-plants, as medicinal plants, or as timber-trees. The information in all cases is given in the fewest possible words. Baron von Mueller is to be congratulated on the honourable part he has taken now for many years in enriching the culture-resources of his adopted country, and we echo his hope that this most valuable manual of useful plants may be placed in the leading library of every Stateschool in the Australian colonies, when it will be sure to aid in educating the youth instructed therein, in a special knowledge that may be of immense service in the future of Australasia. E. P. W.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

[The Editor urgently requests correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible. The pressure on his space is so great that it is impossible otherwise to ensure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

Vignettes from Nature

IF Mr. Grant Allen does not mean what he says, I should strongly recommend him, alike for his readers' sake and his own, to say what he means.

When he wrote, "As a matter of fact, it seems probable that our actual fauna and flora are on the whole not only quite as big as any previous ones, but even a great deal bigger," and went on to cite the "modern" whales, the "living" forty-foot shark, and the elephants of the "recent period" (which not I, but his friendly reviewer, Mr. Wallace, converted into the "present time"), I naturally understood him to mean that the "actual," "modern," or "living" forms of these types are larger than any corresponding "extinct" forms of the same. It now appears, however, that he meant to include *extinct* whales, *extinct* sharks, and the *extinct* mammoth (with, of course, its contemporaries) as members of the "actual" fauna.

To me it seems far better that science should not be taught to